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In a study of school readiness, 90 American born, middle class Jewish children were tested before entering the first grade and divided into two groups. The groups were well-matched with one difference: children were either Ashkenazic (of European descent) or Sephardic (of Syrian descent). Families of both of these groups, however, had been in the United States for at least 25 years. Cognitive measures such as the Stanford-Binet, Columbia Mental Maturity Scale, Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test, and the Bender Visual Motor Gestalt Test were given to the children; parent attitude scales were given to the mothers. Additional data were collected on the educational and financial aspirations of the mothers for their children. Analysis of the data showed significant school readiness differences. The Ashkenazic children, whose cultural background possibly supported academic achievement, were more prepared than the Sephardic children, whose training seemed to stress financial success. Study findings suggest that implicit cultural factors, aspirations, and mores affect children's school readiness, even when poverty and other disadvantages are absent. (MS)

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A Study in Cultural Deprivation

An Occasional Paper

A Publication of the Center for Urban Education

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Learning Readiness in Two Jewish Groups

A Study in "Cultural Deprivation"

by Morris Gross

With an Introduction by John Seeley

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INTRODUCTION

The Means Are Not Enough?

John R. Seeley

Educators, psychologists, sociologists, policymakers, parents and others ought to be fascinated by the study that follows. It is fascinating as a report of a social-scientific venture. It is fascinating in so far as it casts into serious doubt a widespread and most influential belief on a most important point, with profound implications for policy. It is fascinating because of the lines of speculation that it therefore opens up or reopens.

The view which is brought into question by the study is not anything so simple—though still important—as a "mere" pedagogical view, a view as to how to help kids do better in school. What is challenged is a view that has to do not with education alone, but with poverty and progress, the shape of American society and the way to get it into the shape we want, and hence with a view of development—and the means thereto, at home and abroad.

The view under examination, hitherto accepted wisdom, runs like this. Within nations (or between them) we shall never have democracy, functional equality of achievement or opportunity, social justice—and hence social peace—unless and until we have "brought everyone into the twentieth century." "Everyone" means here everyone biologically capable—all except the very small number of people who are brain damaged, radically genetically disendowed, or otherwise irremediably handicapped. Now, apart from these special problem people (each of whose difficulties require individual solutions), it is held that to bring "everyone into the twentieth century" what has to be broken is the *cycle* of poverty or disadvantage that keeps not tens of thousands but millions—or, on a world-scale, billions—economically, politically, socially, and therefore, psychologically out of what is, or is clearly going to be, mainstream society. They are kept out both as contributors and beneficiaries so that both they and the mainstream society are the poorer. Indeed, since for the excluded the results of this process reach as far as self-identification, affiliation and loyalty, life style, self-respect, and personal and shared aims and goals, what we have is either two societies—America, and, in Michael Harrington's phrase, "the other America"—or a society and a nonsociety under one government; not one nation indivisible under God, but one nation fatally divided, held loosely together by fatalism in good times and force in bad.

The general picture is one in which, under widely prevalent *laissez-faire* conditions, the disadvantages of the fathers (not to mention the mothers), are visited upon the children for an indefinite number of generations. This part of the view is not challenged by the study, and properly so since, in these terms, it is virtually beyond challenge.

The view goes on to state that the free, universal, public school system (even though now extended into the high school and, soon, the university) which has been counted on to break up this entailment of life chances for those born differently, has recently been shown not only to be incapable of bringing a remedy to the ill but to have exacerbated rather than mitigated differences, especially the differences of social fortune. For the school, which is more and more the one institution that sorts people and awards labels keyed to life opportunities, on the evidence available proceeds on the principle "unto every one that hath shall be given...but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath." The crucial evidence for this judgment lay in such observations as those noting that as the child proceeded through school differences between the initially relatively advantaged and disadvantaged *increased* not only in achievement but in "measured aptitude" or "capacity": the better became absolutely as well as relatively better; the worse, worse. The school was thus not so much re-sorting the population with each new genetic deal, but, regardless of that new deal, stamping in and confirming the social heritors in their heritage and the disinherited in their disinheritance.

Still unassailable—or, at least, unassailed.

It is when we come to ask how the process of confirmation works, and hence what can be done if we wish to restore the school to its function and the society to a more reasonable degree of openness and justice, and to create in it a fairer capacity to develop and use talent, that the way divides. Early studies showed —and this finding was and still is no inconsiderable part of the problem— that bias and prejudice in the teacher, most often unconscious, led to the fatal exacerbation of the condition she was supposed to remedy. Typically a lower-middle-class person (the observations indicated) and hence agonizingly sensitive and obsessively devoted to middle-class styles and standards, the teacher, at the very point when the child entered school, discriminated, wittingly, between middle-class, mainstream children and all others, in favor of the former and essentially in disfavor of the latter. The very pictures she carried in her heart and head of what was normal and not normal, good and bad, desirable and undesirable, lovely and unlovely, to be warmly or coldly responded to, encouraged and discouraged (or "overlooked")—were representations of idealized, mainstream, middle-class childhood. All other patterns were at the

least alien and frightening, perhaps bad. No matter how pedagogically irrelevant, matters of dress, manner, style, grooming, vocal inflection, if not strictly middle class, came to function as the source of emotional alienation between teacher and child—the grounds for criticism, functional ostracism, and, in effect, extrusion and exclusion of the nonmiddle-class child from the society of the teacher and the "proper" children. A child's responses by way of apathy, sabotage, defiance—again no matter whether conscious or unconscious for the child, the other children or the teacher—then became the obvious ground for further and escalated measures to "improve" him and bring him back under the teacher's guidance but destined further to drive him forth. On the basis of such observations, the teacher and her prejudices, her middle-class anxieties and ethnocentrisms seemed the obvious target for school reform, and anything that could be done to enlarge her sight and sympathy—directly by "educating" her, or indirectly by giving her the money and deference attached to less anxious upper-middle-class status—was what seemed most needed.

The second round of studies showed, however, that not all problems lay in the teacher and that not all the tendency to make bad situations worse rested on irrationality, or on responses to characteristics in the child (such as how he held his body, or when he smiled) irrelevant to the pedagogical process. For what emerged on a second look was that the disadvantaged children brought with them a set of previously trained incapacities plus untrained capacities plus active modalities of behaving, all likely to secure and ensure their defeat even in a system that had fewer irrational anxieties and prejudices. When the teacher first came upon the generalized child of disadvantaged circumstance, he was already well into a process of noneducation, maleducation, miseducation, and countereducation, so these studies showed, that represented the sum and substance of what life had taught him hitherto, and that would for the best of teachers represent a monumental and sometimes insuperable set of difficulties against which a teacher would have to work.

This syndrome—actually a complex in the sense of an *organized* body of disabilities—was seen, in turn, to be embedded in and to result from the very culture of deprivation itself. And the culture of deprivation was readily equated—since the two are so widely concomitant—with the culture of poverty, or with poverty itself. Poverty means powerlessness, which generally includes powerlessness to perform properly as a parent—in this context most particularly to lack the capacities to initiate early learning processes, to furnish models of the relation between rewards (material or nonmaterial) and learning or its product, and the all-important capacity to put potency itself in evidence. But poverty is generally more than powerlessness, especially

if long enduring and unjust. In natural and necessary defense, the poor elaborate, like everyone else, a set of counteractions and counterattitudes that are apt for their situation and unapt for any other. These the children of the poor necessarily learn; and thus, before the beginning of school (regarded at least as an avenue to middle-class opportunity), the poor child is both disabled by omission and "counter-set" by attitude—disarmed for school and armed against it. Nor, given the importance of early learning may he be rearmed for it or disarmed of his armamentarium against it. Indeed, the process is circular. *If* the child is not going to get out of the culture of poverty, he *needs* the lacks and the arms he has; but if he *keeps* them, he will not escape the poverty cycle, and hence *will* need them.

The remedies seemed obvious: get the child before he is made so unfit; break up, if possible, the culture of poverty; uproot poverty.

What the present study demonstrates is that while all this is necessary, not even this will be sufficient for the task at hand. For the study shows differences in "school-readiness" of the same sort as basically handicap the disadvantaged child as against the advantaged one, but in this case between two sets of ostensibly equally and highly advantaged children. All the things, material and immaterial, that are lacking in the Puerto Rican or Negro ghetto or other pocket of disadvantage, and the lack of which is held to "account for" the relative disadvantage of children from such areas, are here lavishly present in both groups compared. Both groups appear to have all the means asserted to be necessary to superior "readiness," and yet one is relatively ready and the other quite decisively not. Moreover, the groups compared are matched with most unusual care: one interviewer, one set of tests in common, one religious faith and type of schooling, one socioeconomic level, and one area of the city—nothing seemingly not common except two cultural strands (and antecedent histories) within the Jewish culture, peoplehood, and tradition.

The importance of the issues this points to cannot be overstated. What is clearly implied is both the virtually invisible persistence of cultural traditions ("ethnic differences") for very long periods even under ostensibly like social conditions, and the depth to which such differences reach, right into something so profound in the ontogenetic process as "measured intelligence" or readiness for school—which comes close to readiness for eventual "successful" participation in the society. (Be it noted that nonsuccessful participation in *this* society is, in effect, nonparticipation, since the value put upon success is so high as to reduce the value of all other things to the status of consolation prizes.)

Moreover, the one ostensible failure of the study is probably scientifically

a further success—that is, the failure of the author to uncover the source of the differences he has revealed. In looking around for "explanatory variables" that might differentiate the two groups (New York Sephardic and Ashkenazic Jews), the author looked to the general American experience and explored whether either or both the mother's educational hopes and expectations or her timing and structuring of "independence demands and restrictions" could account for the differences found in the children. The answer appears to be no, or certainly not clearly or grossly so, or not unless we introduce new differences (such as differential treatment of boys and girls in the same group) to explain the explanations. A very gross question—one of two significant ones in a background data sheet—turns out to represent the only greatly significant statistical difference between the two sets of mothers. The Sephardic mothers in a ratio of three to one want their children to earn $12,000 a year or more or "to be wealthy;" the Ashkenazic mothers in a ratio of two to one opt for less than $12,000 as an income or state that the child's future income is not important to them. Quite a difference!

One might speculate, as the author does, that this difference is the decisive one, or conjecture that it is part of a difference reaching as far back as the differences between the dreams of a merchant prince versus those of a scholar savant. Whatever may be the case—and in another study we should perhaps aim at the parents' fantasies rather than the children's—it seems clear that some general, deep-reaching, covert, and pervasive message is mediated by the parents to the children in the two groups even before formal education is begun, and is quite decisive for the children's careers, educationally and otherwise.

This view is conformable to all I know. Just as there is a psychological underground that ensures that children register and conform to their parents' unconscious wishes (despite the often contradictory conscious and ostensible messages) so also, quite evidently, there is a cultural underground that directs the children to ends that the culture requires but also requires to remain unstated or even to be denied. Children learn the better part of what their parents idiosyncratically really want them to act out in terms of, say, sexuality and aggression not from what they are deliberately told so much as by what they are told with much more dramatic force and effect in a conversation that is continuous and on neither side conscious, enduring from the first day of the puckered mouth at the straining breast until the death of both parents—and beyond. And in much the same manner, we get the messages that are not idiosyncratic, that are in, but not acknowledged as part of, the culture: the competition that is to go on under cover of mutual support and cooperation, for

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example, even (or particularly) in situations of ostensible solidarity and intimacy. This—the only thing that should be called a "sub-culture" in analogy with the sub-conscious—has to be mediated to every child who is to be "correctly" oriented in his culture and not be too much bother as critic (a man who takes the stated culture seriously) or saint (a man who thinks and acts as though thought and action were to be consistently connected). Evidently it is mediated even in its very fine points.

We shall not begin to understand man, society, the formation of the self, or the nature of the culture until we begin to recognize and take count of the two all but totally powerful underground processes that the ostensible (which is what we usually study) serves mostly to counterbalance and conceal.

Mr. Gross' study should encourage us to follow that line—without for a moment ceasing to battle for decent and just chances for everyone as an aim worthy in its own right and, doubtless, a necessary, if not sufficient, condition for countless other goods.

Learning Readiness in Two Jewish Groups: A Study in "Cultural Deprivation"

Morris Gross

INTRODUCTION

This is a report of marked differences in the educational readiness of two middle-class, American-born, Jewish groups. In terms of IQ and academic preparedness, these differences parallel those found between different races and different classes, but it is clear that there are crucial variables other than skin color or money at their source. This study was directed to the oft-assumed unidimensional relationship between economic and educational poverty, that monetary undernourishment is a concomitant of intellectual undernourishment. The demonstration that educational unpreparedness may be found amidst the financially well-to-do represents a caution signal to social engineers who feel that injection of mounds of money will reverse the process of scholastic deficiency. In electing to study preschool differences among middle-class Jewish groups, the desire was to put the notion of a class-bred and economically based culture of poverty to the test. If money is not the only root of the problem, then money is not the sole answer to the problem.

The concern of this study is one of the most serious educational problems in the United States today, the existence of severe cognitive and academic deficiencies among those children currently labeled "culturally impoverished" or "economically disadvantaged." On the basis of extensive research, one may delineate a syndrome-portrait that has been termed the "cumulative deficit hypothesis": a vicious cycle of broken homes, family instability, restricted language development, limited child-adult interaction, and inadequate self-image—all culminating, so far as education is concerned, in seriously deficient academic performance. The underlying problem is seen to be that of financial deprivation. The literature in the area of the "disadvantaged"—see especially two major reviews, one by Riessman[1] and the other a collection edited by Passow[2] —tends to assume that sensory, linguistic, and experiential deprivation are commonly associated with slum conditions and economic poverty, and that these factors are the prime environmental sources of academic retardation.

Martin Deutsch has been one of the principal proponents of the hypothesis

that early unpreparedness is a function of the cultural deficit, limited linguistic and symbolic experiences, and minimal visual and auditory stimulation associated with a lower-class environment. He writes:

> ...the lower-class child enters the school so poorly prepared to produce what the school demands that initial failures are almost inevitable and the school experience becomes negatively rather than positively reinforced....We know that children from underprivileged environments tend to come to school with a qualitatively different preparation for the demands of both the learning process and the behavioral requirements of the classroom.[3]

Deutsch contrasts the lower- and middle-class child in the following way:

> The middle-class child comes to school prepared, for the most part, to meet the demands made on him. The expectations of his teachers are that he will succeed. As he confronts material that is congruent with his underlying skills, he is able to succeed; and thus he achieves the feeling of efficacy which...is so necessary to the 'effectance motivation' which promotes continuing positive interaction with the environment. The lower-class child, on the other hand, experiences the middle-class oriented school as discontinuous with his home environment, and further, comes to it unprepared in the basic skills on which the curriculum is founded. The school becomes a place which makes puzzling demands, and where failure is frequent and feelings of competence are subsequently not generated. Motivation decreases, and the school loses its effectiveness.[4]

It is this unidimensional concept of scholastic unpreparedness, seen as a function of slum conditions and economic disadvantage, that represents the major target of this study. In finding marked differences in learning readiness among two middle-class preschool Jewish groups—thereby excluding the possibility of using money, class, race, ethnicity, and slum conditions as determinants of readiness—the study hoped to show that something deeper than these categories must be offered to account for the difference.

The United States is not the only country caught up with the problem of marked educational deficiencies among a substantial segment of the population. Israel has been struggling with the contrast between the economic and social status of the Ashkenazic Jews, those who came from Europe, and the Sephardic Jews, those who have emigrated from Arabic or Oriental countries. Virtually the same racial problem as exists in the United States, with its at-

tendant educational, class, and economic distinctions, exists in Israel. The darker-skinned Sephardim confront much the same prejudice, hostility, and discrimination that are directed against American Negroes. The same pattern of cognitive deficiency, academic failure, illiteracy, and social disadvantage has been pointed out in both groups by many observers.

Charles E. Silberman writes:

> The analyses that Deutsch, J. McV. Hunt, and others have made of the reasons for the failure of lower class children in schools are virtually identical with the diagnoses Israeli educators have made of the reasons for the academic failures of the so-called "Oriental Jews"—children of immigrants to Israel from the Arabic countries in North Africa (Morocco, Algeria, Egypt) and the Middle East (Iraq, Yemen, Kurdestan). A sizable gap is evident when these youngsters start school: they score, on average, sixteen points lower on IQ tests than children coming from a Western European background. And the gap widens as they go through school; by age thirteen, the IQ differential is twenty-two points. Until remedial measures were taken, few went to high school, which is not compulsory, and hardly any to the university. Yet there could be no conclusion drawn about inherent inferiority; for a thousand years, the flowering of Jewish culture and learning was in Arabic countries. Studies by Israeli educators have pointed to the same reasons for these youngsters' poor academic performance: an impoverishment of environment—a lack of stimulation, particularly of the verbal sort, in the early years—which must be compensated for in some way if it is to be overcome.[5]

This study deals with Ashkenazic and Sephardic Jews who were born in the United States and who bear little external resemblance to the groups described by Israeli social scientists. Where Israeli research has been studying immigrants, displaced families, language barriers, readjustment, and economic deprivation, this study has as its subjects American Sephardic youngsters from families that have not been exposed to social and financial handicaps. The simple question being asked is: do American-born Sephardic youngsters display educational, intellectual, and verbal handicaps as compared with American born Ashkenazic youngsters? If the handicaps are a function of poverty, there should be no significant difference. But if differences are found in this country, too, we then are faced with the question of why—and it may be that the crucial element in Sephardic educational unpreparedness lies in the broad area bound by aspirations, faith in the school system, deeply rooted home

attitudes and values concerning academic achievement, and stress on intellectual competitiveness.

Implicit in this study's focus on preschool readiness was the assumption that such readiness is a likely precursor of academic achievement. Much the same as failure breeds failure, so may mastery and competence breed the same. Since there is ample evidence that the pattern of academic failure begins early, it seemed reasonable to look for the achievement process before formal schooling begins.[6]

It should be noted that the tie between preparedness and later achievement is a recent formulation. For many years the dominant position in American psychology was that early training was relatively inconsequential in regard to later achievement. Hunt describes this position:

> Many such studies appeared to yield results which could readily be seen as consonant with the notion that practice has little effect on the rate of development, and that the amount of effect to be got from practice is a function of the level of maturation present when the practice occurs. It was just such a notion and just such evidence that led Watson to argue in his book, *The Psychological Care of the Infant and Child,* that experience is unimportant during the preschool years because nothing useful can be learned until the child has matured sufficiently. Thus, he advised that the best thing possible is to leave the child alone to grow. Then, when the child has "lain and grown," when the response repertoire has properly matured, those in charge of his care can introduce learning.[7]

Jensen describes the current position:

> Once it was believed that if a child lacked "readiness" all one had to do was wait for time to pass while some maturational process reached a certain level of development necessary for the child to learn the kinds of things for which he was said to need readiness. Now it is known that the largest part of such "readiness" is a product of prior learning. And as any primary teacher who has taught children from both lower- and middle-class backgrounds knows, there are conspicuous social class differences in "readiness."[8]

THE TWO TRADITIONS

This is not the place for a comprehensive review of Jewish history, but several highlights are essential if one is to appreciate the Sephardic-Ashkenazic problem in Israel. Although the origins of the two traditions are lost in history,

the past few centuries have seen the major Sephardic communities along the North African perimeter, while the Ashkenazim have been part and parcel of the meteoric expansion of Western European civilization. Much the same as the Ashkenazic community is viewed by historians as an entity in continuous interaction with a surrounding Christian culture, so must the Sephardim be understood as a permeable enclave within the Moslem world.

It is not coincidental that the decline of Arab culture from the 16th century onward marks also the decline of Jewish cultural creativity in the Moslem countries. The Sephardim shared both the relative tranquility and the general intellectual decline of the Ottoman Empire. Patai writes:

> Assimilation in every respect but religion was an accomplished fact.... The way of life, the language spoken, the clothing worn, the food eaten, and many other cultural traits, had long become practically identical among Jews and Moslems. Demographical characteristics, such as birthrate, deathrate, life expectancy, incidence of and proneness to disease, all these had become almost identical between the two. Here was a Jewry, which, as a 19th century observer put it, was in Arab lands "Arab in all but religion"; in Persia it was Persian in all but religion.[9]

It is almost as if, starting around the 16th century, the Moslem world became static and lethargic. Until very recently, it remained untouched by the scientific revolution, industrialization, mass education, political change, and intellectual advance. Jews in the Arab countries were fairly secure and equal, but it was the equality of a deep trance, of stagnation, illiteracy, and poverty. Western influences did not permeate the crescent until the 20th century. From 1500 to 1900, there was virtually no change in the population level of Sephardim, while the Ashkenazim multiplied twenty-fold.

The last few centuries have been relatively kind ones for the Sephardic Jews under Islam. To the credit of Islam, the Jews were shielded from the more virulent forms of antisemitism. However, the price of shelter was general cultural decline, for the Jews of the Arabic crescent were also sheltered from contact with the mighty revolutionary movements of Western Europe. Population level remained stationary and there was little movement or migration. Religious customs and traditions were maintained, but Jewish cultural productivity was minimal. In contrast with the vibrant philosophic, political, and religious movements in the Jewish and general world of the West, the Orient remained tranquil and asleep.

The industrial revolution strongly affected the Ashkenazic Jews. Traditionally well-represented in commerce and trade and with a sizable middle class

by the 19th century, the technological and scientific advances increased their influence and status.

Ruppin discusses the long attachment of the Jew to large towns, capitals, and urban centers.[10] Having few ties to the soil or rural traditionalism, the Jews congregated readily about the mercantile and manufacturing centers. Since the city was the major locus of European change over the past three centuries, much of the Ashkenazic expansion must be seen within the backdrop of the urban revolution. The city provided mass education, hygienic conditions, new political ideas, transmission lines for political change, and the opportunity for population growth.

TABLE 1

POPULATION OF ASHKENAZIM AND SEPHARDIM, 1170-1954[a]

Year	*Jewish Population*	*Ashkenazim*	*Percentage of Total Jewish Population*	*Sephardim*
1170	1,500,000	100,000	6.7	1,400,000
1300	2,000,000	300,000	15.0	1,700,000
1500	1,500,000	500,000	33.3	1,000,000
1650	1,750,000	700,000	40.0	1,050,000
1700	2,000,000	1,000,000	50.0	1,000,000
1800	2,500,000	1,500,000	60.0	1,000,000
1840	4,500,000	3,600,000	80.0	900,000
1860	6,000,000	5,200,000	86.6	800,000
1900	10,500,000	9,550,000	90.5	950,000
1930	15,900,000	14,600,000	91.8	1,300,000
1939	16,180,000	14,885,600	92.0	1,294,400(?)
1950	11,473,354	9,990,080	87.07	1,483,274
1954	11,763,491	10,018,608	85.16	1,744,883

[a] *H. J. Zimmels.* Ashkenazim and Sephardim. *(London: Oxford University Press, 1958), p. 75.*

Although the Sephardim and Ashkenazim generally went their own ways for hundreds of years, the Hitler inferno and the Arab-Israeli War of 1948 finally brought them together in the new state of Israel. In the short period of one decade and with lightning suddenness, two long-separated brothers were uprooted from their ancestral homes and placed together in a strange land. However, when the two streams finally met, it was apparent that two different cultures were involved. Israeli social scientists were soon aware that physical relocation is simpler than cultural integration. The scope and intensity of the cleavage between the two groups, which has been described in

a full-length analysis by Shumsky, is strikingly like the problems presented by the disadvantaged in this country. Shumsky minces no words about the seriousness of the Israeli problem:

> Five years ago, open discussion of ethnic group tensions and differences was very unpopular and uncommon in Israel. But today [1955] the question of ethnic group relations has become a front-page issue. The feeling is widespread that the nation is divided—that there are two Israels: Occidental and Oriental.[11]

The magnitude of the problem can be seen by some random statistics: In 1958, though the Orientals constituted half the population, only 5 per cent of them graduated secondary school. In 1952, there were only six Orientals among the 120 members of Israel's parliament. As another example of the skewed pattern of Oriental Jews, one study revealed that the ratio of retardation was seven Orientals to one Ashkenazi.

This historical overview gives but the broad outlines of the Sephardic-Ashkenazic divergence. It would be helpful to one's understanding of the basic problem to delve into the flesh and blood of these two cultures before they met in Israel, and, fortunately, there are several socioanthropological and psychological studies that permit a view of each in its respective natural "habitat."

Zborowski and Herzog; Lee

In a thorough, careful, gentle, and somewhat romanticized picture of the *shtetl* or East European Jewish community, Zborowski and Herzog have delineated its traditions, values, family interactions, and occupational patterns, as well as a host of sociological minutiae. Their work is a classic in recapturing the antecedents of the American Jewish community.[12]

There are many fascinating aspects to *shtetl* life, but the one of particular relevance is that of its educational level of attainment. Dorothy Lee, an anthropologist, has searched for the aspects of the *shtetl* that helped create the compulsive drive to learn. She asks what it is that incites an individual to develop his potential to the utmost, what spurs a member of the *shtetl* to put forth all he has. Her view is that where cultural motivation is strong, obstacles to learning or achievement are swept away. She compares modern technology with its message of sparing effort, of not exerting oneself, with the message carried by *shtetl* life.

> The little Jewish boy saw only one way open to him—excellence in scholarship; and, if not in scholarship, then excellence in business dealings which would make scholarship possible for others.

> Mediocrity, noninvolvement, effortless existence were not alternatives unless one was ready to cease to be a true and good Jew.... To my mind, the secret lies in the supporting values of the home and the community as well as in the encouragement of a questioning mind, of a mind that demands the right to come to its own conclusions. It does not lie in the specifics of the social organization or of the cultural pattern; and certainly not in the pedagogical principles of the beginning *kheder* [elementary school].[13]

Lee points out that everything was wrong with the educational system of the *shtetl* according to our principles, that the curriculum was uninteresting, the hours long, the teaching pedagogically unsound, and the teachers without compassion. Yet, this system produced scholars, philosophers, scientists, and people whose lives were devoted to learning. The crucial element, which Lee has culled from Zborowski and Herzog's portrait of the *shtetl,* is the community's pervasive respect for learning. A learned man was the pride of the community, he bore financial and personal hardships for the sake of study, and in general self-improvement through education was seen as an all-consuming duty and purpose.

This "education consciousness" of the *shtetl* may constitute the cultural heritage that can account for the higher educational aspirations of American Jews. There are fragments of evidence that suggest the incidence of college attendance among Jews to be two to three times that of the total white population. After controlling for other variables, Strodtbeck found that 71 per cent of Jewish lower-class high school students wanted to attend college, as compared with 38 per cent of Italians. Strodtbeck views the higher education aspirations and occupational mobility of the Jew as being related to the latter's readiness to leave home and make his own way in the world and to his belief in man's ability to control his own future.[14] Comparing Jews, white Catholics, Negro Protestants, and white Protestants, Lenski has found that the Jew is the most likely of these groups to: "complete a given unit of education"; "develop a commitment to the principle of intellectual autonomy"; and "save to achieve objectives far in the future."[15] Of interest here is West's conclusion that financial reasons do not explain the failure of able students to attend college, that both parental attitudes toward education and cultural factors are the most important determiñants.[16] Terman attributed the drive for higher education and professional careers to stimulation stemming from the Jew's respect for learning.[17] In a recent survey conducted by the Merit Scholarship Corporation, it was found that Yeshiva College, Brooklyn College, City College, and Queens College produce the largest percentage of graduates who go on for

Ph.D. work. It is Astin's contention that the ethnic and religious characteristics of the students enrolled in these four colleges are important factors affecting such productivity.[18]

If one views the European *shtetl* and the American Jewish community as one line of development, then Ashkenazic culture may be characterized by ambition, upper mobility, achievement orientation, and intellectual productivity.

Patai

As the only anthropologist in Palestine before the establishment of Israel, Patai in his description of Sephardic Jews provides invaluable insights for this study. Although he will be quoted liberally, his complete book is necessary for a student of Ashkenazic-Sephardic interaction. Patai's first point is that Oriental Jews must be seen within the framework of the total environment:

> Up to the penetration of Europeans into the Middle East in the 19th century, Oriental Jews never had any first-hand contact with European peoples or cultures. They lived in an all-Oriental cultural atmosphere and ethnic environment, and as the centuries passed they became more and more saturated with the traditional culture of the Middle East of which Jewish culture originally was a variant and which, therefore, was similar to their own at the very outset of their long sojourn in Islamic lands.[19]

Patai lists a long series of developments that have only recently become part of the Oriental scene: technical advance, the factory system, soil chemistry, scientific packing, banking, insurance, hygiene, and mass education. However, lack of industrialization as well as economic activism and social change must be understood in the context of the Oriental *weltanschauung* and the deep sway that religion holds over one's entire life in the Middle East. Man knows that he must work, but there is no love for labor, no pride in industriousness. Work is an inevitable burden, a necessary evil, the curse of Adam.

After his lengthy description of the family relations, religious beliefs, and social structure, Patai offers a succinct statement of the typical profile which is likely to result from the Islamic culture:

> The personality type most likely to develop, and most likely to achieve a satisfactory degree of adjustment in such a sociocultural setting is characterized by such traits as obedience and subordination to parental and group-authority, tending with the advance of age and status to become transformed into a self-assertive authoritarianism in the traditionally sanctioned sense; tradition-abiding

> conservatism; inclination to follow established patterns in both thought and action; a preoccupation with the past, the "good old days when men were men"; an ingrained veneration of old age which is regarded as synonymous with wisdom, experience and influence; a capacity for self-effacement and group-identification; a habit of thinking in terms of "We" rather than "I"; and a tendency to reject innovations and to distrust anything new and unknown.[20]

Shumsky

Mention has already been made of Shumsky's work, *The Clash of Cultures in Israel,* the most thorough review of the Ashkenazic-Oriental problem available in English. His complete book is invaluable to one interested in the subject, but several features are particularly pertinent to this study. Shumsky points out that the bulk of Oriental Jewry has lived for centuries in backward Arab countries. He describes the feudal land system, the exploitation of peasants, the illiteracy, and the pervasive poverty of these countries. Shumsky then proceeds to depict the standard European personality with its stress on the importance of the individual and his power to reconstruct the world. Directly germane to this study is Shumsky's delineation of the Ashkenazic Jew's accent on achievement, his culturally induced willingness to forego immediate gratifications for future goals. The Oriental Jew is seen as passive, submissive, unwilling to change, while the Ashkenazi is seen as striving, self-directed, and motivated toward achievement.

Shumsky's most trenchant contribution is his description of the disintegration of the society and culture of the Orientals. The searing of interpersonal relations and the implanting of deep self-doubts form the twin poles of his portrait of Oriental dissolution. Although he recognizes that centuries-long divergent development created different value systems, ego ideals, and occupational structures, he argues that the key to Ashkenazic-Oriental differences is a psychological and cultural one.

> Among the Ashkenazim, the traditional admiration of those learned in the Torah, the aspirations that Israel should become the "spiritual center" for the Diaspora [the scattering of the Jews throughout the world, which occurred after the Babylonian exile], the belief that only a high level of specialization can solve the socio-economic problems of the country, and the emphasis on individual achievement and success, have combined together into a faith in education as the major channel for the fulfillment of national and personal goals.

> Ashkenazi parents expect their children to do well in school. Interest and anxiety about school success is inculcated through reward and punishment. Good grades and report cards are rewarded by praise or gifts. The yearly graduation day is celebrated by all who are promoted. When the child reports any behavior difficulties in the school, the parents support the teacher rather than their own child. Parents (especially the mother) try to meet the teacher, and many of them are ready to support the school activities (especially in the first grade).[21]

This description of the Ashkenazic parents sounds very like the typical description of the middle-class parent in this country.

DESIGN OF STUDY

An unusual opportunity arose to study learning readiness among comparable groups of American Sephardic-Ashkenazic Jews. This writer located a community of Sephardic Jews (of Syrian descent) who have been living in Brooklyn for about fifty years. They maintain their own congregations, clubs, schools, and recreational facilities. Although there is much contact with other groups, both Jewish and non-Jewish, the community has managed to remain aloof and to retain its own traditions and social life. Since most American Jews are Ashkenazim, location of an Ashkenazic sample posed no problem. However, an Ashkenazic community that has existed alongside the Sephardic one was selected to permit one more control—neighborhood. In addition, each community was served by an all-day Hebrew school (or Yeshiva), and these two schools, but two city blocks apart, provided the population for the study. Hence, a series of controls was built into the study:

1. The children shared the same general neighborhood.
2. All children and mothers were native born.
3. English was the language of the home.
4. No subject possessed any gross physical or mental handicap.
5. The homes were tradition-conscious—that is, the parents were ready to incur the financial burden of a private religious school although a quality public school is in the area. Furthermore, the physical plants of the two private schools were similar, both modern structures about ten-years-old. Both are eight-grade schools, offering a program of Hebrew studies in the morning and secular studies in the afternoon. The major difference, of course, was that one school catered to a Sephardic clientele and the other to an Ashkenazic.

Besides the study's built-in controls of age, religion, race, language, type of school, neighborhood, and tradition-interest, several procedural steps were taken to insure further experimental care. First, all of the testing was done during the late spring and summer of 1965 in order to minimize the spread of testing time. Second, all testing and collection of related data were done by the writer; hence, all the children were being tested by the same person at about the same time. Third, since all of the applicants to the two schools were processed, there was no problem of random sampling or stratification. All children who applied for entrance into the first grade of the two schools were potential subjects for this study, and were selected if they came from an intact home and had a native-born mother and if English was the language of the home.

The one problem in regard to the study's population was to control for social class. It is clear that social-class differences influence intellectual development.[22] Yet there are few invariant or clearly delineated guidelines for class placement. For purposes of this study, the writer considered a child a member of the middle class if one of four conditions was met: family income was above $8,000, a family lived in its own home, rental was above $120 per month, or one parent had a college education. These standards are possibly higher and more rigid than would commonly be demanded for middle-class placement.

Once the child was selected, a battery of cognitive tests was administered to the child and a series of questionnaires was given to the mother. The school-related tests were measures of academic preparedness while the questionnaires were attempts to probe for parental concomitants of readiness. Since the two areas of information constitute virtually distinct parts of the study, each will be described separately.

Cognitive Measurements

Since the element under study was academic preparedness, it was felt that it would be advantageous to use several achievement-related assessment devices. First, the weaknesses of a unidimensional concept of intelligence have been pointed out by many writers and use of any one test carries this limitation. Second, dependence on one predictor of later achievement involves considerable hazards, especially with young children. Negativism, short attention span, fatigue, and distractibility are some of the problems one faces when testing young children. If rapport, concentration, and interest vary with different tests, several measures are more likely to be valid than one. Third, the focus of this study was cultural attitudes and experiences, and there may be familial encouragement and experiential advantages on

some skills and mental processes to the neglect of others. Lesser, Fifer, and Clark have made this very point:

> Since ethnicity has unequal, differential impacts upon different mental abilities, certain mediators represent plausible explanations for the processes which underlie the association between ethnicity and intellectual behavior. One such plausible explanation is based upon variations among ethnic groups in the history of differential reinforcement for learning different mental skills. There seems little doubt that different emphases among ethnic groups in the specific intellectual functions which are stimulated and encouraged are reflected in their different organizations of mental abilities.[23]

In short, since the hypothesis of this study was that all aspects of intellectual functioning are relatively underdeveloped for the Sephardic children, use of several measures of readiness permitted a multiple analysis and comparison.

To assess different areas of mental performance, the following tests were administered:

1. *Stanford-Binet*—This widely used and highly respected individually administered intelligence test was selected as the initial means to assess differences between the two groups. The form used was the third revision, published in 1960.[24] This revision incorporated the best items of the two 1937 forms and eliminated many obsolescent questions.

2. *Columbia Mental Maturity Scale*—Requiring no verbal response and a minimum of motor response, the Columbia Mental Maturity Scale was selected for its especial suitability in evaluating the intellectual abilities of young children.[25] The scale includes 100 attractively drawn cards, each consisting of a series of from three to five drawings. The child must select the one that is different from, or unrelated to, the others in the series. Since the items are arranged in order of difficulty, the intellectual discriminations required range from gross color and form recognitions to high order concepts. The scale has been used with economically disadvantaged youngsters, for the items depicted are generally within the experience of all children and no speech is required.

3. *Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test*—Another test which is simple, attractive, and requires no speech is the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test.[26] It consists of 150 plates of four drawings; the child must point to the correct picture-referent of the verbal stimulus. Since the test measures receptive rather than expressive language, the child need only indicate that he has recognized the word. Characteristics such as self-confidence, passivity, and willingness may

not be crucial where articulation is not required and personal involvement is minimal. Whereas the Columbia Mental Maturity Scale tests the child's reasoning ability, the Peabody assesses language proficiency.

4. *Bender Visual Motor Gestalt Test*—For many years one of the standard tests employed in examining the presence and extent of brain damage has been the Bender Visual Motor Gestalt Test.[27] Consisting of nine simple designs that are presented individually on cards, the test requires the subject merely to copy each design. Although the test has been used to detect perceptual and neurological disorders, in this study it was intended as an indicator of academic potential and school readiness. This new use of the test follows the outlines of Koppitz' work.[28] The essence of this approach is that there is a strong relationship between the level of an individual's perceptual and motor development and his scholastic achievement. Koppitz reports correlations of from .46 to .75 between first-grade Bender scores and later achievement. Since there is great value in early detection of academic problems, Koppitz has constructed a developmental scoring system that permits such screening of school beginners at the kindergarten level. All subjects were tested with the Bender and all protocols were scored according to the Koppitz system.

Parent Questionnaires

The first objective of this study was to demonstrate learning readiness differences between the two groups of Ashkenazic and Sephardic youngsters. The next objective was to locate some background factors that may account for such differences. There have been many attempts to link behavior patterns with family-based training procedures and value orientations.[29] Since the behavior product under study is academic achievement, the search pattern has followed the broad outlines of the McClelland achievement-motivation school of thinking.[30] In an attempt to find some relationships between parental responses to questionnaires and children's school preparedness, several shafts were lowered:

1. *Winterbottom*—Working within the McClelland research orientation, Winterbottom found that early demands by mothers for independent behavior were related to higher "need achievement" (as McClelland puts it) in eight-year-old boys.[31] She constructed two questionnaires to tap attitudes toward "independence training," one a series of 20 "independence demands" and the other 20 "independence restrictions." The mother checks whether the fragment of behavior listed is a goal of her training and she also writes at what age she expects the behavior to occur. Each mother in the present study filled

in the questionnaires while her child was being tested. If the mother could not or would not complete the scales, the questionnaires were taken home and later returned by mail.

2. *Mėdinnus*—A second probe was aimed at eliciting the mother's attitude toward education. More positive attitudes may reflect a higher value being placed on education and a readiness to prod, encourage, support, and stimulate intellectual attainment. Use of Medinnus' "Attitude Toward Education Scale" offered the opportunity to determine whether the level of academic preparedness among Ashkenazic children is related to a parent's evaluation of the importance of education. In constructing the scale, Medinnus explains:

> In general, research has shown that families of different social levels have differing attitudes toward education and the school. Upper- and upper-middle class parents place great emphasis upon the value of education, while lower-middle and upper-lower class parents regard education as important primarily insofar as it prepares the child for a vocation. Lower-lower class parents often regard the school with suspicion and consider education as essentially unprofitable. Studies of school drop-outs have indicated that the family's attitudes toward education play a major role in the student's decision to leave school.[32]

3. *Data Sheet*—A third source of attitudinal information was the background information sheet. Two potential attitudinal discriminations were placed amidst background questions regarding such matters as number and ages of children. The first probe concerned the level of education planned for the child, while the second asked for the level of income desired for the child. Behind these seemingly innocuous questions was a search for the differential role of money and education in the two subcultures.

ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

The results on the four tests administered to each child—Stanford-Binet, Columbia Mental Maturity, Peabody Picture Vocabulary, and the Bender Visual Motor Gestalt Test—were all in the hypothesized direction. Table 2 reports the basic test data and indicates that the totals were significantly higher for the Ashkenazic youngsters, at the .01 level on the Stanford-Binet, Columbia Mental Maturity, and the Peabody, and at the .05 level on the Bender. The largest mean difference was on the receptive language test, the Peabody.

TABLE 2

MEANS, STANDARD DEVIATIONS, AND t COMPARISONS OF AGE AND TEST SCORES FOR SEPHARDIM AND ASHKENAZIM

	Sephardim (N = 48)		*Ashkenazim (N = 42)*		
Measure	*Mean*	*SD*	*Mean*	*SD*	*t*
Age (in months)					
Boys	70.6	4.2	69.2	3.1	1.30
Girls	70.4	3.6	69.7	4.2	.50
Both	70.5	4.0	69.4	3.7	1.33
Stanford-Binet					
Boys	110.5	10.9	114.7	9.7	1.42
Girls	108.4	11.4	117.7	10.5	2.40[a]
Both	109.9	11.1	116.1	10.2	2.73[b]
Columbia Mental Maturity Scale					
Boys	98.1	8.4	105.8	9.6	3.11[b]
Girls	98.0	8.7	106.1	10.4	2.32[a]
Both	98.0	8.5	106.0	10.0	4.00[b]
Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test					
Boys	97.4	20.0	117.3	18.0	3.71[b]
Girls	91.5	13.8	107.5	20.6	2.46[a]
Both	95.7	18.6	112.6	19.9	4.13[b]
Bender Visual Motor Gestalt Test					
Boys	11.1	2.8	10.0	3.0	1.32
Girls	10.3	3.1	9.4	2.5	.95
Both	10.8	2.9	9.7	2.7	1.88[a]

[a] *On t test,* $p \leq .05$.
[b] *On t test,* $p \leq .01$.

To determine whether sex or subculture was the significant variable and to determine the relative contribution of each variable, a series of analyses of variance was done. As is evident from Table 3, the Sephardic-Ashkenazic factor contributed significantly to the variance on three of the tests, while the only time sex of the child approached statistical significance was on the Peabody.

TABLE 3

ANALYSES OF VARIANCE FOR SUBCULTURE, SEX, AND ACHIEVEMENT-RELATED TESTS

Source	*df*	*MS*	*F*
Stanford-Binet			
Subculture	1	927.83	7.88[a]
Sex	1	3.71	.03
Between	1	137.16	1.17
Within	86	117.70	--
Columbia Mental Maturity Scale			
Subculture	1	1271.84	14.33[a]
Sex	1	.12	.00
Between	1	.82	.01
Within	86	88.73	--
Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test			
Subculture	1	6557.24	17.72[a]
Sex	1	1265.20	3.42
Between	1	76.60	.21
Within	86	370.02	--
Bender Visual Motor Gestalt Test			
Subculture	1	20.27	2.44
Sex	1	10.32	1.24
Between	1	.08	.01
Within	86	8.32	--

[a] *On F test*, $p \leq .01$.

Table 4 summarizes the intercorrelations among all relevant variables in this study, both cognitive and noncognitive. Generally, all cognitive tests were interrelated, while no single one showed a significant relationship with any of the five familial predictors (variables five to nine). Regarding the four learning-related tests, too, the moderate correlations indicate that much unrelated variance remains. For example, the highest single r, that between the Stanford-Binet and the Peabody, permits a predictive efficiency of but 29 per cent. Although the four tests are not tapping identical sources, the Ashkenazic

TABLE 4

INTERCORRELATIONS AMONG LEARNING READINESS MEASURES AND NONCOGNITIVE VARIABLES

Variable	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*	*6*	*7*	*8*	*9*
1 Stanford-Binet	.43[b]	.70[b]	.19	-.12	-.03	-.05	.06	-.10
2 Columbia Mental Maturity Scale	--	.39[b]	.14	-.04	.03	-.17	-.05	-.07
3 Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test	--	--	.21[a]	-.03	.01	.02	.06	-.16
4 Bender	--	--	--	.19	.08	.07	.04	.09
5 Number of Winterbottom Independence Demands	--	--	--	--	.14	.64[b]	.03	-.11
6 Mean Age of Independence Demands	--	--	--	--	--	.07	.64[b]	-.13
7 Number of Winterbottom Independence Restrictions	--	--	--	--	--	--	.15	-.10
8 Mean Age of Independence Restrictions	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	-.18
9 Medinnus Attitude Toward Education Test	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

[a]*On z transformation, $p \leq .05$.*
[b]*On z transformation, $p \leq .01$.*

youngsters remained superior on all. In short, the hypothesis that Ashkenazic youngsters would be better prepared, found ample support.

Parent Questionnaires

Since the data demonstrated the existence of learning readiness differences between the two groups of Sephardic and Ashkenazic youngsters, the next step was to attempt to link parental attitudes to these differences. As noted, three

questionnaires were administered to each mother: Winterbottom's independence restrictions, Medinnus' Attitude Toward Education Scale, and the Data Sheet. Each of these will be analyzed separately.

TABLE 5

MEAN NUMBER AND AGES OF WINTERBOTTOM INDEPENDENCE DEMANDS AND RESTRICTIONS; SCORES OF MEDINNUS ATTITUDE TOWARD EDUCATION; SCHOOLING OF MOTHER AND FATHER

Variable	*Sephardim*			*Ashkenazim*		
	Male	*Female*	*Total*	*Male*	*Female*	*Total*
Number of Independence Demands	14.8	15.3	15.0	14.9	15.3	15.1
Age of Independence Demands	80.3	77.7	79.5	81.1	78.1	79.4
Number of Independence Restrictions	10.4	12.0	10.9	11.3	11.3	11.3
Age of Independence Restrictions	68.3	69.1	68.5	68.2	73.2	71.0
Medinnus Attitude Toward Education	99.7	96.8	98.8	93.4	90.1	91.6[a]
Highest Grade Level Completed by Mother	12.1	11.9	12.0	13.1	12.9	13.0[a]
Highest Grade Level Completed by Father	11.9	12.5	12.1	13.4	13.6	13.5[a]

[a] *On t test,* $p \leq .01$.

Winterbottom

The data were treated in several ways. First, total number of independence demands and restrictions were compared. As is evident from Table 5, there was no significant difference between Sephardic and Ashkenazic mothers for either. Indeed, the mean number of demands are remarkably similar: 15.0 and 15.1. Parenthetically, Table 4 indicated that there was a correlation of .64 between number of achievement demands and number of achievement restric-

tions. There seems to be a strong tendency for mothers who check many demands to check many restrictions, and vice versa.

Second, mean age of independence demands and restrictions were computed. Again, remarkable equivalence was shown: mean independence ages of 79.5 and 79.4. Hence, neither totals nor mean ages offered a lead to account for the readiness differences.

TABLE 6

MEAN AGES FOR EACH OF WINTERBOTTOM INDEPENDENCE DEMANDS

Item	*Sephardim*			*Ashkenazim*		
	Male	*Female*	*Total*	*Male*	*Female*	*Total*
1 To stand up for his own rights with other children	5.6	4.9	5.4	5.4	5.7	5.6
2 To know his own community	9.1	8.8	9.0	9.0	8.3	8.7
3 To play outside when noisy	5.3	5.0	5.2	6.7	5.2	5.8
4 To try new things on his own	6.8	5.8	6.5	5.7	5.8	5.7
5 To be active in vigorous sports	6.0	5.0	5.8	5.9	5.2	5.5
6 Pride in ability to do things well	5.9[a]	5.4	5.8	4.3	5.1	4.8
7 Take part in his parents' interests	9.0	8.7	8.9	8.3	7.7	7.9
8 Try hard things without asking for help	7.1	5.8	6.7	7.0	7.2	7.1
9 Able to eat without help handling food	5.8	4.9	5.5	5.3	6.2[a]	5.8
10 Lead other children and self-assertion among peers	6.4	5.8	6.2	6.4	7.3[a]	6.8
11 Make friends among same-aged children	5.5[a]	4.6	5.2	4.8	4.9	4.8
12 Hang up clothes and look after possessions	5.9	5.5	5.8	5.5	6.0	5.8
13 Do well in school on his own	6.3	5.8	6.1	5.9	5.9	5.9
14 Able to undress and go to bed by himself	5.7	5.5	5.6	5.3	5.6	5.5
15 Have interest and hobbies of his own – be able to entertain himself	5.8	6.3	5.9	5.1	5.5	5.3
16 To earn his own spending money	11.8	15.7[a]	12.9	13.7	13.1[a]	13.4
17 To do some regular tasks around the house	6.0	6.4	6.1	7.2[a]	5.8	6.4
18 To be able to stay at home during the day alone	9.5	10.4	9.9	10.3	10.7	10.5
19 To make for himself decisions like choosing his clothes or how to spend money for toys, hobbies, recreations	9.2	9.5	9.3	11.8[a]	10.9	11.2
20 To do well in competition with other children – to try hard to come out on top in games and sports	7.6	6.8	7.4	6.6	6.0	6.4

[a] *On t test,* $p \leq .05$.

A third treatment was therefore attempted where each of the 40 test items was analyzed separately. Tables 5 and 6, which report the results, indicate that no single pattern is apparent. Very few scores are significant, and there is no consistent trend for either sex or subculture. It is only on the basis of extensive examination and dissection of the 40 items that one can begin to identify two discrepant profiles. For the first pattern to be discerned, one must understand that each of the Winterbottom items does not reflect the same dimension of independence training. For example, the "caretaker" demands, such as getting dressed or getting ready for bed, are qualitatively different from demands asking for competitiveness or success in school. If one, then, looks for underlying groupings, there are four items that amount to a cluster of concern for the child to move out on his own, acquire skills, and explore new possibilities: know his way around the city (item 2); try new things for himself (item 4); do well in competition (item 20); and make his own friends (item 11). It is significant that on each of these items the Ashkenazic mother, as compared to the Sephardic mother, expected her child to be on his own earlier. Although no single item was statistically significant, there remains the suggestion that independence training is accentuated in the Ashkenazic home and that school readiness is related to such achievement motivation.

When one pursues this cluster of four items further, however, what emerges is a discrepant pattern between Sephardic males and females. To permit treatment of the four items as one score, all four were converted to z scores, and a t test for the combined four items was done. There was no difference between Ashkenazic males and females, but the difference between Sephardic males and females was significant far beyond the .01 level. The key difference, then, in regard to independence training may be in the particular area of differential sex roles rather than being a more total difference between the Sephardic and Ashkenazic subcultures. Each may have its own different attitude towards the process of male and female socialization.

Indeed, a similar trend was noted when another cluster of Winterbottom responses was inspected closely. For this analysis, the items were assembled for which Sephardic mothers had earlier age demands for females than males while the situation was just the reverse for the Ashkenazic mothers. The items were: eat alone, lead other children, make friends, be respectful, not boss other children, not fail at school work, not stay out after dark, and not depend on mother for suggestions. Once again, these eight items were converted to z scores and treated as single means. Although there was no difference between the Sephardic females and the whole group of Ashkenazim, the t score for the comparison between Sephardic males and all the Ashkenazim was significant at the

TABLE 7

MEAN AGES FOR EACH OF WINTERBOTTOM RESTRICTIONS

Item	*Sephardim*			*Ashkenazim*		
	Male	*Female*	*Total*	*Male*	*Female*	*Total*
1 Not to fight with children to get his own way	5.3	5.4	5.3	5.7	5.9	5.8
2 Not to play away from home without telling his parents	5.5	5.9	5.6	4.8	5.5	5.3
3 Not to be noisy and boisterous in the house	5.1	5.7	5.3	4.9	5.7	5.3
4 To be cautious in trying new things on his own when his parents are not around	6.6	7.2	6.7	6.7	6.4	6.5
5 Not to run and jump a lot	5.8	6.7	6.1	5.8	6.0	5.9
6 Not to try to be the center of attention. Not to boast or brag	5.6	6.2	5.8	6.8[a]	6.5	6.7
7 To be respectful and not to interfere with adults	5.9[a]	5.8	5.9	4.9	5.5	5.2
8 Not to try to do things that others can do better	8.0	8.0	8.0	7.3	—	7.3
9 Not to be sloppy at the table or eat with his fingers	5.0	4.5	4.8	5.2	5.0	5.1
10 Not to boss other children	5.9	5.5	5.7	5.1	6.1	5.7
11 Not to play with children he doesn't know or of whom his parents don't approve	5.9	6.3	6.0	5.3	5.0	5.1
12 Not to leave his clothes lying around or his room untidy	6.0	6.2	6.1	5.6	6.1	5.9
13 Not to fail at school work	6.2	5.7	6.0	5.9	6.1	6.0
14 Not to stay out after dark	6.8[a]	5.4	6.3	5.3	7.1[a]	6.3
15 Not to depend on his mother for suggestions of what to do	8.4[a]	7.2	7.9	5.2	7.0	6.4
16 Not to earn money or take a job without his parents' consent	12.0	13.4	12.5	10.1	13.4	11.9
17 Not to whine or cry when his mother leaves him alone	4.5	4.4	4.5	5.3	5.6	5.5
18 Not to try to do things around the house where he will be in the way	6.2	5.7	6.0	5.0	4.5	4.8
19 Not to make important decisions like choosing his clothes or deciding how to spend his money without asking his parents	9.0	12.5	9.9	12.7[a]	12.2	12.3
20 Not to try to beat other children in play	6.0	5.5	5.8	7.5	6.7	7.0

[a] *On t test,* $p \leq .05$.

.05 level. These discrepant patterns for males and females suggest that Sephardic sons are indulged and coddled in comparison with the relatively earlier demands made upon Sephardic daughters. In the Ashkenazic home, in contrast, it is the male who is prodded and pressured while the daughter is relatively sheltered and dealt with permissively. Thus, part of the Ashkenazic male's readiness for school, in comparison with his Sephardic male counterpart, may be a product of earlier achievement demands. (One possible explanation for the different male-female socialization patterns of the two subcultures may be the different traditions out of which each emerged. For example, the Sephardic pattern may reflect the tendency in Arabic society to place a male heir on a pedestal and the deeply rooted attitudes in Oriental culture of condescension towards the female.)

Another pattern of discrepant responses centers about money matters. The Sephardic mother's permissiveness in regard to the son's dependency seems to wane when money is involved. A male is expected to learn the following behavior at an earlier age than the female: earn spending money; decide how to spend his own money; and not to spend his money without asking his parents. For each of these money-related items, the Ashkenazic mother expected the daughter to learn such behavior earlier than the son. In subjecting this cluster of three items to the same z conversion and t comparison, it was found that the Ashkenazic males and females did not differ significantly. However, for both the Sephardic male-female comparison and the comparison of Sephardic and Ashkenazic males, the t scores were significant at the .05 level.

In brief, for Sephardic males, the mothers seem quite patient and permissive on independence items, but they become more demanding when money is involved. For Sephardic females, home-care aspects are expected to be learned early, but there is no stress on early learning regarding money-related matters. Finally, in the Ashkenazic home, money-related learning was not related to sex. Two explanations for these differences may be offered. First, there may be more of the traditional female role in the Sephardic home, resulting in an earlier stress on the caretaking aspects of independence training. (Eat alone: Sephardic female = 4.9; Ashkenazic female = 6.2, with $p = .05$.) Second, the image of achievement for the Sephardic youngster may be wealth and the resultant emphasis may be on early economic advancement. (Earn own spending money: Sephardic male = 11.8; female = 15.7, with $p = .05$; Ashkenazic male = 13.7.)

The Sephardic adults in this sample are certainly achievers in terms of their economic position, but the nature of their achievement very much centers on business. The Sephardic boy may be told in effect that he need not be concerned

with hanging up his clothes, but he had better be precocious in earning money. The basic point is that one should not speak of a unidimensional achievement drive but rather, in this case, which element of achievement is stressed in which subculture for which sex.

One final note concerning the Winterbottom data and the research on need achievement. Measurement of achievement motivation has commonly been on the basis of TAT-type fantasy material, but in this study the criterion was actual achievement, not fantasy production. There is the possibility that achievement motivation and actual achievement follow different sets of laws. McClelland, in his research, was seeking to locate an innate drive including wish fulfillment and fantasy aspirations, while achievement as such refers to what has actually been produced. If this distinction is valid, there may be no conflict between the Winterbottom findings and the negative results of this study. Significantly, the single study most similar to this one found that early independence training is not a predictor to achievement in basic academic skills. Chance also studied the relationship between the mother's attitude toward independence training, as assessed by the Winterbottom questionnaire, and the actual achievement of their children in the first grade. She found: "Children whose mothers favor earlier demands for independence make poorer school progress relative to their intelligence level than mothers who favor later independence demands."[33] Her explanation was that mothers who make demands early are more distant and less supporting. The driven child may possess achievement motivation—in McClelland's terms—but he may be achieving on a lower level precisely because of the pressures to succeed. The difference, then, between the criteria of the need achievement studies and this study must be kept in mind.

Medinnus

To elicit the parent's attitude toward education and to determine whether Ashkenazic academic preparedness is related to a higher value being placed on education, the Medinnus Attitude Toward Education Scale was administered. Table 5 indicates that the responses of Sephardic mothers were significantly higher than those of the Ashkenazim. On the surface, this appears to be a surprising result. One would expect positive attitudes toward education to correlate with higher achievement. But there are situations where this is not so, where investigators have found quite the reverse—that negative attitudes correlate with high achievement or greater amounts of education. In a review of parental involvement in school programs and of the different social-class attitudes toward education, Cloward and Jones conclude:

> In general, then, middle-class respondents have the more negative

> opinion of the public schools. They are more likely to consider the public schools one of the major problems of the community, are less likely to feel that it is doing a good job, and are more likely to disagree with the assertion that the teachers are really interested in their students.... This was found to be a consequence of amount of education alone. The more years of school a respondent had completed, the more likely he was to disagree with the assertion that teachers were really interested in their pupils.[34]

As is evident from Table 5, both Ashkenazic mothers and fathers had a significantly higher amount of education. Hence, in accord with the Cloward and Jones results, this finding could explain why the more highly educated parent is more critical of the school and possesses a more negative attitude toward the educational system.

Nonetheless, the results pose a dilemma for this study, since the question now is whether the Ashkenazim value education less than the Sephardim or whether the Medinnus scale does not assess education-mindedness. Part of the problem may be Medinnus' attempt to include several possibly disparate elements under one heading. Medinnus points out that several different areas were represented among his 40 statements: the parent's willingness to support the school in matters of discipline, policy, administration, and finances; and the parent's evaluation of the importance of education. Several questions arise: Is it feasible to combine these divergent dimensions into one attitudinal scale? May a parent look back at his own unpleasant school experiences and nonetheless value education highly for his child? Is awareness of the incompetence of some teachers and administrators fundamentally antithetical to "education consciousness?" Is it possible that hypercriticism and complaints of low standards and ineptitude are true reflections of concern, interest, and commitment? To pose these questions is to register a feeling of deep skepticism regarding the ability of a pencil-and-paper test to tap an individual's level of educational commitment. Possibly, how one actually behaves may be more revealing: how much personal pleasure does an individual actually forego for the sake of his child's education? Or, more to the point, how much of one's time is invested in providing education for oneself as well as one's child? The likelihood is that people do differ in the premium they place on education, in the extent of sacrifice they are willing to make for the sake of intellectual growth, and in the centrality or peripherality of scholarship in their value system. But these considerations cannot be examined in terms of the Medinnus scale. For this study, in any case, the question must remain open and the findings must remain unresolved.

Data Sheet

A third source of attitudinal information was the background data sheet. Two potential attitudinal discriminations were set amidst questions on such matters as number and ages of children. The first concerned the level of education planned for the child and the second the level of income desired for the child. The results, reported in Table 8, indicate that in regard to educational expectations there was little difference between Sephardic and Ashkenazic mothers. Of the respondents, a majority of both groups anticipated a college degree for his child. Highly revealing, however, were the differential responses to level of earnings desired. Twice as many Ashkenazic mothers checked the comment that earnings were unimportant and three times as many Sephardic mothers checked that they wanted their children to be wealthy. The computed chi square was significant at the .01 level. There is the possibility that this seemingly innocuous question may reflect the core variable of this study: the differential role of money and education in the two subcultures. When forced to go beyond a lip-service paean to education, the Ashkenazim may vote for scholarship and brain pursuits, while the Sephardim may choose wealth and material comforts.

TABLE 8

NUMBER OF YEARS OF SCHOOLING PLANNED FOR CHILD AND LEVEL OF INCOME DESIRED[a]

	Sephardim	*Ashkenazim*
Education Planned:		
Graduate High School	3	1
Junior College	7	3
Graduate College	21	21
Graduate School	9	8
	$\chi^2 = 2.975$	$\chi^2_{.05} = 5.991$
Earnings Desired:		
Unimportant to me	8	16
$5,000	0	2
$8,000	2	2
$12,000	9	3
I want him to be wealthy	18	6
	$\chi^2 = 11.533$[b]	$\chi^2_{.01} = 9.210$

[a] *Reason for different totals is that all respondents did not answer each question.*
[b] *On t test,* $p \leq .01$.

CONCLUSIONS

One must be careful and circumspect in generalizing from this study. First, the number of subjects is small Second, the Sephardic sample consists of one particular subgroup and there is no statistical justification in generalizing from this sample to all Sephardim. Similarly, the Ashkenazic sample need not be typical of other Ashkenazic groups. Third, the study is limited by the measuring instruments, the difficulties inherent in testing young children, the deception and self-deception involved in answering questionnaries, the exploratory nature of the noncognitive assessments. With these limitations in the background, several conclusions seem warranted:

1. Variables beyond class, ethnicity, and cultural deprivation are required to understand academic achievement. Here were two Jewish middle-class groups and, yet, marked differences in school readiness were apparent. Indeed, the differences resemble those uncovered in Negro-white studies in the United States and Oriental-Western studies in Israel. Also, all aspects studied indicated a superiority on the part of the Ashkenazim and consistent inferior academic preparation in the case of the Sephardim. Since the superiority of the Ashkenazic youngsters held true with regard to the Stanford-Binet, a nonverbal reasoning test, a verbal appraisal, and a measure of visual-motor development, there was no recourse to differential reinforcement of particular skills or mental traits. It is clear from this study that Jews do not constitute a monolithic structure in regard to early academic preparedness or attitudes toward education. It is also evident that the neat explanatory categories of poverty, race, or social class as a source of this or that attitude toward education or "culture" require amplification and qualification.

2. Regarding the attempt to relate child-rearing practices and attitudes to the differences in preparedness, the results were disappointing. No clear-cut links were apparent between motivational or attitudinal variables, as measured by questionnaires, and learning readiness. Nonetheless, one cannot conclude on the basis of these essentially negative results that the two subcultures share the same value orientations and attitudinal complexes. There is the likelihood that the instruments in use are still primitive, blunt, and ill-suited for the subtleties being sought. Moreover, the constructs of achievement motivation, independence training, and valuing education, upon which measures are based, are ill-defined and of questionable unidimensionality.

3. Although the following overall conclusion remains speculative and suggestive, it is offered as an effort to provide some explanation for the marked differences in learning readiness between the two samples. It is herein pro-

posed that the differences are related to long-standing cultural ideals and stresses—that, in effect, culture does not die easily and that different ways of life are transmitted to offspring. Although both groups have been in this country for at least a quarter of a century, the likelihood is that they still hold deeply imbedded differential value systems. The groups' origins in Ashkenazic Europe or Sephardic Arabia have not been totally transformed with relocation to American soil. Both groups may share middle-class status and a high level of achievement motivation, but they may have entered the middle class through two different portals, money and education. The Sephardi's achievement drive may be directed to the accumulation of wealth while the Ashkenazi may retain his *shtetl* commitment to book-centeredness. The ego ideal of the Ashkenazi may still be the scholar, though in the form of a white-coated physician or chemist, while the ideal of the Sephardic community may be the merchant-prince. In the abstract, Sephardic mothers may preach the virtues of education, but in the concrete her actions may point in other directions. Further research might focus on the quality and quantity of her verbal interplay with the child. How much encouragement and stimulation of cognitive growth is there? The question is one of urgency about, commitment toward, and active molding of preparatory skills.

It is herein suggested that a child may be prepared, at the tender age of five or six, for the intellectual life. He may already have internalized a way of looking at learning, a style of performing, an approach to study and cognitive tasks. Furthermore, such readiness orientation is acquired through encouraging features of the environment, through deeply imbedded cultural values and role models, and, finally, through emotional communication that knowledge is the essence of life.

IMPLICATIONS

The core finding of this study was a significant readiness difference between two privileged Jewish groups. The Ashkenazic preschool children in this sample were significantly better prepared for the intellectual demands of school than were their Sephardic compeers. Since this study was an extension of Israeli research, the similar educational handicaps of American Sephardic children require explanation. Where the IQ differential between European and Oriental children in Israel was 16 points, this study found a 17 point difference (on the Peabody). However, the Israeli explanation of the difference —the anomie caused by limited opportunities, persecution, ghetto living, and economic impoverishment—cannot be the answer for the data of this study. The Sephardic mothers in this study were not "deprived," however one

defines the term. In many cases, they had minks, maids, and country homes. Similarly, the sensory, linguistic, and experiential deprivation, commonly associated with slum conditions and economic poverty, were not apparent; the Sephardic mothers were all native born, high school graduates, and none worked. The "cumulative deficit hypothesis" offered to account for displaced Orientals in Israel or slum dwellers in America is not applicable to the Sephardim of this study.

One broad implication of this study, then, is that the term "cultural impoverishment," as commonly understood, is not sufficient to explain the academic deficiencies noted in lower-class American children and Oriental Israelis. There remain broad gaps in our knowledge of the process of academic achievement, despite the well-ordered nexus of underachievement which the literature associates with slum living. The point here is not a matter of disputing, for example, Martin Deutsch's convincing correlations between scholastic unpreparedness and economic deprivation. Rather, the point is that this study has indicated that there exists an unexamined factor, beyond those of class, ethnicity, race, and money, that determines academic readiness.

Although this study was unable to pinpoint the specific ingredients of the relative unpreparedness of the Sephardim, it seems clear that part of the missing achievement profile is in the area of cultural values and attitudes. This study shifts the locus of concern from external to internal factors, from lack of opportunity to lack of drive and appetite for intellectual stimulation. If the animal is hungry, it actively craves and seeks food, willingly crosses an electrified grid to reach its goal. If an individual is driven to educational attainment, he will overcome economic handicaps or massive physical and environmental obstacles. The heart of educational deprivation may be lack of internal need or drive, not insufficient opportunity. The Sephardim in this study were blessed with privilege, money, and comfort, but their level of academic readiness was similar to that of their underprivileged Israeli counterparts. Among the dynamics of the academic achievement process, strivings and values *within* the individual and subculture represent a significant variable. It is being suggested here, then, that poverty is a hurdle and not a barrier.

In identifying an economically advantaged Jewish group that does not stress educational aspirations, this study is closely related to Bernard Mackler's examination of the economically deprived slum youngster who does succeed academically. Mackler's target is also the unidimensional association between cultural impoverishment and academic achievement:

> At present, the conceptual frame that is used to explain the academic failure of the disadvantaged child is "cultural deprivation."

> The literature appears to assume that deprivation leads to one universal reaction.... The writers usually conclude that only by drastic educational revisions and severe alterations of the economy can new blood be poured into these "deprived" children.... The unanswered question here is, how do some children succeed under these adverse conditions?[35]

Mackler points out that not all children from poor families remain illiterate and impoverished, that not all lower-class children fail to learn or read. He argues that a theory of deprivation must be broad enough to explain why certain pupils succeed and others do not given the same social background. In both his study and the present investigation, the search is for an understanding of school competitiveness and success in terms of internal achievement "appetite," not external categories.

What is further implied from this study is that infusions of money may not alter the achievement pattern, that economic change will not increase academic productiveness. Poverty programs assume that improvement of housing conditions or economic conditions will change the underprivileged adult into one who values education, prepares his child intellectually, and prods him to academic achievement. If the Sephardim in this study may be viewed as Orientals with money, then it follows that economic improvement alone will not alter the essence of economically underprivileged Americans or Israelis. Life styles, success standards, and avenues of achievement may be totally independent of finances. One's social ascent from economic depression need not alter achievement orientation for baseball, jazz, women, or theology. Tastes in food, clothes, or women may become more expensive with rising wealth, but there is no reason to assume a change of value orientation in the direction of the academician, intellectual, or scholar. Educational indifference depends on the mind, not the pocket, and bulging pockets may be used for purposes other than education. It is fair to include education among those best things in life that are free; all it really requires is a searching mind, a desire to learn, and a feeling that knowledge is more important than anything in the world. Changing adverse conditions is no guarantee that the life styles of a culture will be reshaped. Goals, purposes, or ideals dictate what one does with money, or without it.

What must be made clear is that this writer is not arguing for continued slum conditions. He is strongly in favor of economic opportunity, affluence, and upward social mobility for all, but the question is whether economic improvement will lead to academic changes. The banners of various poverty programs tend to stress the ancillary academic products of slum living; low IQ, poor academic motivation, inadequate cognitive preparation, and low academic aspira-

tional level. Poverty ought to be eliminated as intrinsically pernicious, not because economic improvement leads to academic advancement. Academic underemphasis may be seen in economically advantaged groups, while scholastic productivity may be found amidst economic impoverishment.

Indeed, why should one assume that improvement of housing conditions will increase parent-child verbal interaction or intellectual stimulation? This confusion between economic (or physical) factors and behavioral styles may represent cultural ethnocentricism on the part of social scientists. The evaluative criteria and arguments for change are the middle-class norms and values so dear to the academicians and intellectuals who petition for, legislate, direct, and implement programs for the disadvantaged. The Sephardic fathers of this study were certainly achievers, but they preferred to channel their energies into the accumulation of wealth. Must they conform to the standards of life styles of the Ashkenazim? Must lower-class Negroes conform to the life styles and values of middle-class whites? There is an element of white colonialism in the attempt to reshape the economically underprivileged in the image of education-minded, intellectually oriented academicians.

More fundamental than the limitations of the construct is the question whether one may speak of "cultural impoverishment" at all. Are there any objective criteria whereby one may classify cultures as superior or inferior, rich or poor? Implicit in the notion is the assumption that a culture committed to academic improvement is higher than one that is not, but is it possible that academically backward cultures are more relaxed, less troubled, and less pressured? The question that arises is whether social scientists are justified in prodding the so-called disadvantaged children into intellectual achievement, into maximizing their academic potential. One can argue for many other important goals, such as emotional health, social adjustment, moral development, aesthetic tastes, or inner tranquility. Possibly, the Ashkenazim ought to learn from the Sephardim how to underplay academic drive.

To sum up, it appears that "cultural deprivation" is an inadequate construct. If economically advantaged Sephardim are also relatively underprepared for school, a multidimensional view of deprivation is required. Poverty may be but the veneer for cultural aristocrats, while wealth may conceal cultural hovels. Pouring money into depressed areas, erecting schools, libraries, and cultural centers, may not reverse the process of academic apathy (though, as already indicated, there are other good reasons to support such constructions). In seeking such a reversal, the search may have to be for the inculcation of educational drives and aspirations, for academic strivings, for commitment to learning. Quite simply, ideas and purpose may be the pivotal point of cultural rise or demise.

FOOTNOTES

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